

Message Text

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P R 171150Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7029

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

CDR USSAG NKP

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 VIENTIANE 8529

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE TWO LAO PARTIES HAVE MOVED AHEAD, THOUGH AT A MEASURED PACE, IN IMPLEMENTING THE LAO PROTOCOL SIGNED THREE MONTHS AGO. THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT WAS THE INTRODUCTION OF 2400 LPF POLICE AND MILITARY PERSONNEL IN LUANG PRABANG AND VIENTIANE TO BEGIN THE NEUTRALIZATION OF THOSE TWO CITIES. THE RAPIDITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THIS "TRANSPORTATION DRIVE" PLUS THE DISCIPLINE, ARMS AND SUPPLIES OF THE ARRIVING LPF PERSONNEL INITIALLY STARTLED AND DISTURBED CONSERVATIVE RLG LEADERS. LPF CONDUCT, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN GENERALLY UNEXCEPTIONABLE AND TWO MONTHS AFTER THE FIRST ARRIVALS, APPREHENSION SEEMS TO HAVE DISSIPATED.

DELEGATIONS TO THE JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT (JCCIA) WERE APPOINTED BY OCTOBER 2 BUT MET FORMALLY FOR THE FIRST TIME ON NOVEMBER 23 -- AFTER MORE THAN 90 PERCENT OF THE LPF FORCES HAD ARRIVED. AFTER FOUR WEEKS OF MEETINGS, CONFIDENTIAL

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PROGRESS IN JCCIA IS BEING MADE ONLY HALTINGLY AS THE LPF RESTRAINS THE PACE AND THE RLG IS UNABLE TO PRECIPITATE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON THORNY QUESTIONS INVOLVED IN COMPLETING NEUTRALIZATION OF LUANG PRABANG

AND VIENTIANE. THE LPF HOLDS THAT THE CITIES MUST BE FULLY NEUTRALIZED BEFORE THE PGNU AND JNPC CAN BE CREATED.

DURING THIS PERIOD, THE RLG HAS MADE ENCOURAGING PROGRESS IN PREPARING FOR THE NEW COALITION ERA. IT MOVED WITH UNUSUAL DISPATCH AND COMPETENCE TO ACCOMMODATE THE ARRIVING LPF PERSONNEL. THE RLGAF HAVE, WITH USG ASSISTANCE, MOVED AHEAD TO TACKLE CRITICAL PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATION, LAOIZATION AND FORCE REDUCTION. THE RLAF IS INCREASINGLY DEVOTING ITS EFFORTS TO A PEACETIME LOGISTICS MISSION AND HAS IN RECENT MONTHS BEEN PARTIALLY REPLACING US AIR CONTRACTORS FOR CIVILIAN AIR DROPS. RLG IS NOW TRYING TO FIND A SUITABLE RELOCATION SITE FOR RLAF T-28'S WHICH, UNDER PROTOCOL PROVISIONS, MUST BE MOVED FROM BASES AT VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG.

SINCE THE PROTOCOL WAS SIGNED, THE CEASE-FIRE HAS REMAINED EXCEEDINGLY EFFECTIVE. CEASE-FIRE INCIDENTS, CASUALTIES AND COMBAT AIR SORTIES ALL CONTINUE AT CONSISTENTLY LOW LEVELS. THE SINGLE DISTURBING EXCEPTION HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN NUMBER OF US AIR CONTRACT AND RLG AIRCRAFT WHICH HAVE RECEIVED GROUND FIRE, MOST OF WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN GENERAL FLIGHT PATH OF RESUPPLY OF RLG ENCLAVES OF BOUAM LONG AND MUONG SOUL.

IN CONCLUSION, THE LAO PARTIES HAVE PROCEEDED DELIBERATELY BUT STEADILY IN LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING MILITARY AND POLITICAL PROVISIONS OF THE FEBRUARY AGREEMENT. LPF PRESENCE IN VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG CONSTITUTES A SIGNIFICANT COUNTERVAILING FORCE AGAINST ANY EFFORT TO REVERSE OR DISRUPT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT. WITH THE ACTIVATION OF THE JCCIA, THE PARTIES ARE INSTITUTIONALIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT. THE PARTIES HAVE SECURED INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR EFFORTS FROM THE PRC, THE SOVIETS, THE U.S., JAPAN, FRANCE AND AUSTRALIA AND ARE DISCUSSING THE REACTIVATION OF THE ICC. ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE MAINTAINED A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE AND THE LEISURELY PACE MAY HAVE GIVEN LAO LEADERS ON BOTH SIDES TIME TO ADJUST TO THE NEW EMERGING ENVIRONMENT. HOWEVER, THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PRIME MINISTER BELIEVES THE TIME HAS NOW COME FOR FURTHER SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM OF THE LAO SETTLEMENT. END SUMMARY.

I. INTRODUCTION

THREE MONTHS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE SIGNING OF THE LAO PROTOCOL, WHICH SETS THE TIMING AND PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FEBRUARY 21 AGREEMENT. OPTIMISTIC EXPECTATIONS THAT THE ADVENT OF THE DETAILED PROTOCOL WOULD LEAD TO RAPID FORMATION OF THE NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT (PRIME MINISTER HAD HOPED BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S SCHEDULED ADJOURNMENT ON OCTOBER 11), HAVE NOT BEEN REALIZED. THE TWO SIDES HAVE, NONETHELESS, MOVED AHEAD IN IMPLEMENTING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE

PROTOCOL AND THE CEASEFIRE IS HOLDING FIRM. THE PRESENT MESSAGE SUMMARIZES THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PAST THREE MONTHS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL.

II. NEUTRALIZATION OF VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG

THE LPF HAS CONSISTENTLY HELD THAT THE FIRST STEP IN IMPLEMENTING THE PROTOCOL MUST BE THE INTRODUCTION OF LPF POLICE AND MILITARY SECURITY PERSONNEL TO BEGIN THE NEUTRALIZATION OF VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG AND GUARANTEE THE PERSONAL SECURITY OF LPF SENIOR PERSONNEL. THREE WEEKS AFTER THE PROTOCOL WAS SIGNED, THE LPF AND RLG EACH NAMED THEIR SEVEN REPRESENTATIVES TO THE JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT (JCCIA) WHICH UNDER THE PROTOCOL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NEUTRALIZATION OF THE TWO CITIES. HOWEVER, THE JCCIA MET ONLY INFORMALLY UNTIL THE BULK OF LPF SECURITY PERSONNEL HAD ARRIVED IN LATE NOVEMBER. THE FOLLOWING CHART ILLUSTRATES THE NUMBERS OF SECURITY PERSONNEL THE LPF ARE ENTITLED TO BRING INTO THE TWO CITIES AND THE NUMBERS NOW ON HAND IN THOSE CITIES:

	VIENTIANE	LUANG PRABANG
	UNDER PROTOCOL	UNDER PROTOCOL
	NOW ON HAND	NOW ON HAND
JCCIA AND SUB-COMMITTEES (ASSISTANTS, SPECIALISTS, SECURITY PERSONNEL)	120 PLUS	20 PLUS
JOINT POLICE FORCE	1,000	500

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PROTECTIVE

MILITARY

BATTALION	600	300
TOTAL	1,720	1,463

THUS, OF THE 2,540 TOTAL PERSONNEL HYPOTHETICALLY PERMITTED TO THE LPF BY THE PROTOCOL, 2,436 (OR MORE THAN 95 PERCENT) HAD ARRIVED IN VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG BY DECEMBER 4. THE PRIME MINISTER TAKES THE POSITION THAT THE PROTOCOL FIGURES APPLY ONLY TO LPF MILITARY PERSONNEL, AND AS MANY CIVILIANS CAN COME AS WISH TO.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7030
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 4 VIENTIANE 8529

SEVERAL POINTS CONCERNING THE INFLUX OF THE LPF
PERSONNEL MERIT PARTICULAR ATTENTION:

(A) THE "TRANSPORTATION DRIVE" WAS RAPIDLY AND
EFFECTIVELY CONDUCTED. FLIGHTS OF SOVIET AN-12'S TO
VIENTIANE AND PRC IL-14'S TO LUANG PRABANG CARRIED ABOUT
2300 PEOPLE AS WELL AS MANY TONS OF FOOD, FURNISHINGS
AND WEAPONS INTO THE TWO CITIES OVER THE COURSE OF JUST
THREE WEEKS, OCTOBER 11-18 AND NOVEMBER 3-20. THE SIZE
AND SPED OF THE INFLUX OF LPF PERSONNEL INITIALLY
STARTLED AND DISTURBED CONSERVATIVE LEADERS, ESPECIALLY
WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES, WHO WERE NEITHER MENTALLY NOR
ORGANIZATIONALLY PREPARED FOR SUCH EARLY OR RAPID
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEUTRALIZATION. THEY PERSUADED
SOUVANNA TO SUSPEND THE AIRLIFT FOR TWO WEEKS, EFFECTIVE
OCTOBER 18, IN AN EFFORT TO FORCE THE LPF TO BEGIN JCCIA
MEETINGS FIRST. MINIMAL LPF CONCESSIONS ON THE MONITORING
OF THE INFLUX, TOGETHER WITH THE ABSENCE OF ANY INCIDENTS,
WEAKENED THE CASE FOR FURTHER DELAY AND THE PRIME MINISTER
PERMITTED FLIGHTS TO RESUME ON NOVEMBER 3.
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(B) THE LPF PERSONNEL ARE WELL-DISCIPLINED, WELL-
ARMED AND HEAVILY SUPPLIED. LPF FORCES IN VIENTIANE HAVE
NOT BEEN CONSPICUOUS, ALTHOUGH LPF PERSONNEL
IN LUANG PRABANG APPEAR TO BE CIRCULATING MORE FREELY.
DESPITE SOME COMPLAINTS THAT LPF CADRE ARE ENGAGED IN
UNAUTHORIZED PROSELYTIZING ACTIVITIES, THEIR CONDUCT
HAS BEEN GENERALLY UNEXCEPTIONABLE. THERE HAVE BEEN NO
SIGNIFICANT LPF CONFRONTATIONS WITH RLG SECURITY PERSONNEL.

(C) THE RLG INSELF MOVED WITH UNUSUAL DISPATCH
AND COMPETENCE TO PREPARE FOR THE LPF
ARRIVALS. ON FAIRLY SHORT NOTICE, THE RLG
NOT ONLY LOCATED PREMISES TO HOUSE THE INCOMING SECURITY
FORCES, BUT ALSO RENOVATED THEM SO THEY WERE SUITABLE FOR
OCCUPANCY. THE RLG HAS ACCOMPLISHED MOST PREPARATIONS
USING ITS OWN RESOURCES; BUT IT HAS ALSO SOUGHT WITH SOME

SUCCESS TO ENLIST FOREIGN ASSISTANCE IN MEETING SOME OF THE REQUIREMENTS SUCH AS EXTRA VEHICLES AND FURNISHINGS. TO DATE THE U.S., USSR, JAPAN, FRANCE AND AUSTRALIA HAVE EITHER GIVEN OR PLEDGED ASSISTANCE TO THE JCCIA.

III. JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT (JCCIA)

THE JCCIA HAS GOTTEN OFF TO A SLOW START. BOTH SIDES HAD NAMED THEIR RELATIVELY LOW-RANKING SEVEN-MEMBER DELEGATIONS BY OCTOBER 2, BUT THEN MORE THAN SEVEN WEEKS OF RELATIVE QUIESCENCE FOLLOWED AS THE RLG TRIED TO CONVOKE A MEETING OF THE COMMISSION AND THE LPF DEMURRED ON VARIOUS AND FREQUENTLY SPECIOUS GROUNDS. ONLY AFTER MORE THAN 90 PERCENT OF THE LPF FORCES HAD ARRIVED DID THE JCCIA ON NOVEMBER 23 BEGIN HOLDING FORMAL WEEKLY MEETINGS SUPPLEMENTED BY MORE FREQUENT INFORMAL WORKING SESSIONS.

AFTER FOUR WEEKS OF MEETINGS, PROGRESS IS BEING MADE, BUT AT A SNAIL'S PACE, AND ONLY ON MINOR ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS SUCH AS THE DESIGN OF INSIGNIA FOR JCCIA MEMBERS. MOST RECENTLY, AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON THE DECISION THAT JCCIA IS AN INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION WHICH WILL HAVE EQUAL AND COORDINATIVE RELATIONS WITH THE PGNU AND JNPC.

FROM THE BEGINNING, THE ATMOSPHERE IN JCCIA MEETINGS HAS BEEN AMICABLE, UNMARRED BY POLEMICS OR PROPAGANDA. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE LPF HAS BEEN CONTROLLING THE PACE OF THE COMMISSION BY FORMULATING THE AGENDA AND PREPARING THE BASIC WORKING DOCUMENTS FOR EACH MEETING. THE RLG HAS, ITSELF, MADE NO NOTABLE MOVES TO GAIN THE INITIATIVE IN THE MEETINGS. THUS, NEITHER SIDE BEARS EXCLUSIVE ONUS FOR THE DELAY. THE JCCIA WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO MARK TIME AT LEAST SO LONG AS LPF DELEGATION CHIEF SOTH PHETRASY (WHO DEPARTED VIENTIANE DECEMBER 6) AND PERHAPS EVEN PLENIPOTENTIARY PHOUMI VONGVICHIT (ABSENT SINCE SEPTEMBER 20) REMAIN IN SAM NEUA. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS ATTEMPTED TO BREAK THIS IMPASSE BY INVITING SOUPHANOUVONG TO MEET WITH HIM DIRECTLY TO ACCELERATE FORMATION OF THE PGNU. SOUPHANOUVONG DECLINED THE SUGGESTION BUT DID SO IN A COURTEOUS MESSAGE WHICH POINTED OUT THAT THE LPF, ON THE BASIS OF THEIR HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE, HELD IT IMPERATIVE THAT NEUTRALIZATION OF THE TWO CITIES BE ACCOMPLISHED FIRST. SOUVANNA SENT ANOTHER MESSAGE TO SOUPHANOUVONG DECEMBER 14 URGING THAT HE SEND A PLENIPOTENTIARY REPRESENTATIVE AND SEND A LIST OF MINISTER CANDIDATES TO VIENTIANE TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS TOWARD FORMATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

WHEN THE JCCIA BEGINS TO WORK INTO THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ON ITS AGENDA, THE HIGHEST PRIORITY QUESTION WILL BE "THE CONCRETE PROBLEMS" OF NEUTRALIZING THE TWO

CITIES. THESE PROBLEMS WILL PRESUMABLY ENCOMPASS SUCH THORNY QUESTIONS AS DEFINING LINES OF COMMAND AND CONTROL OVER THE FORCES AND PRESCRIBING DUTY PROCEDURES FOR THEM. DEPLOYMENT OF THESE JOINT FORCES WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE MINIMAL CONDITION FOR THE "REAL NEUTRALIZATION" OF THE TWO CITIES WHICH SOUPHANOUVONG IN HIS DECMEBER 7 REPLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER HAD CALLED THE "INDISPENSABLE CONDITION" FOR THE FORMATION OF THE PGNU AND JNPC.

IV. RLG ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER 14.

FOR ITS OWN PART, THE RLG, WITH USG ASSISTANCE, HAS MADE ENCOURAGING PROGRESS IN PREPARING FOR THE NEW COALITION ERA. THE IMPORTANT PROGRAM FOR INTEGRATING INTO THE FAR THE FORMER IRREGULARS, WHO HAVE BEEN THE OBJECT OF LPF CRITICISM, HAS ENTERED A CRUCIAL PHASE AS THE INTEGRATED LOGISTICS BATTALIONS CREATED EARLIER THIS YEAR ASSUMED THE JOB OF SUPPLYING BOTH REGULARS AND FORMER

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IRREGULARS. MILITARY COMMANDERS HAVE BEGUN TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF REDUCING RLGAF FORCES TO LEVELS WHICH THE USG CAN SUPPORT AND TEY ARE NOW DRAWING UP PLANS TO REDUCE PERSONNEL STRENGTH FROM THE CURRENT LEVEL OF 78,000 TO 60,000 BEFORE JUNE 30. THE COMMANDERS APPEAR TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS REDUCTION MUST BE BORNE NOT ONLY BY FORMER IRREGULARS AND MUST BE CARRIED OUT TO PRESERVE MAXIMUM RLGAF FIGHTING STRENGTH. ROYAL LAO AIR FORCE (RLAF) HAS ALSO BEEN MOVING THROUGH A TRANSITIONAL ERA AS ITS EFFORTS ARE INCREASINGLY DEVOTED TO PEACETIME LOGISTICS MISSION. RLAF, WHICH HAS CARRIED ALL MILITARY CARGO SINCE THE CEASEFIRE, HAS IN RECENT MONTHS BEEN PARTIALLY REPLACING U.S. AIR CONTRACTORS FOR CIVILIAN AIR DROPS. ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION OF SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7031
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 4 VIENTIANE 8529

IS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LONG TIENG ROAD. THE ROAD WHICH CONNECTS WITH NATIONAL ROUTE 13 IS BEING CONSTRUCTED UNDER USAID/DOD AUSPICES AND FUNDING, AND SHOULD BE COMPLETED FOR AN ALL-WEATHER CAPABILITY BEFORE THE WET SEASON. ON DECEMBER 1, A CONVOY OF TEN TRUCKLOADS OF REFUGEE FOODSTUFFS TRAVELLED FROM VIENTIANE TO LONG TIENG ON THE NEW ROAD, AND POL PRODUCTS ARE NOW BEING TRUCKED TO LONG TIENG OVER THE ROAD. THESE EVENTS MARK A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN INTEGRATING MR-II, ITS HEADQUARTERS AT LONG TIENG AND ITS REFUGEE POPULATION INTO THE HEARTLAND CONTROLLED BY THE RLG.

THE NEUTRALIZATION OF LUANG PRABANG AND VIENTIANE RAISED PARTICULARLY PAINFUL PROBLEMS FOR THE RLGAF TO RESOLVE. ARTICLE X(E), WHICH PROHIBITS THE BASING OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT IN EITHER CITY, CAUSES PARTICULAR DIFFICULTIES BOTH FOR THE U.S. AND RLG. REDEPLOYING THE AIRCRAFT WILL BE EXPENSIVE AND THE U.S. WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO PICK UP PART OF THE TAB. FINDING SUITABLE FACILITIES THAT ARE ACCEPTABLE TO THE RLG IS DIFFICULT.
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THE RLGAF HAVE PROPOSED THAT COMBAT AIRCRAFT FROM VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG BE MOVED TO BAN KEUN AND SAYABOURY, RESPECTIVELY, AND HAS ASKED FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN SO DOING. NEITHER OF THESE PLACES HAS ADEQUATE AIRFIELD FACILITIES; CONSTRUCTING NEW FACILITIES WOULD COST \$1.4 MILLION AT BAN KEUN AND \$1.8 MILLION AT SAYABOURY. CONSIDERING THAT ONLY 4 AC-47'S AND 4 T-28'S WOULD BE TRANSFERRED FROM VIENTIANE AND ONE AC-47 AND SEVEN T-28'S FROM LUANG PRABANG, THE COSTS ARE NOT JUSTIFIED, EVEN IF FUNDS WERE AVAILABLE.

THE MISSION HAS COUNTERED THE FAR PROPOSAL BY RECOMMENDING THAT THE AIRCRAFT BE TRANSFERRED TO BAN HOUET SAI AND VANG VIENG. VANG VIENG ALREADY HAS FACILITIES TO HANDLE MANY OF THESE AIRCRAFT AND CAN BE FURTHER UPGRADED AT A LESSER COST.

THE BALL IS NOW IN THE RLG'S COURT AS THE MISSION, ON NOVEMBER 30, REPLIED UNFAVORABLY TO THE REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN BUILDING AN AIRFIELD AT BAN KEUN. THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE TO DATE. THE MISSION BELIEVES THAT BAN KEUN IS STILL THE RLGAF CHOICE; FOR POLITICAL REASONS BAN KEUN, IN RLG-CONTROLLED TERRITORY IS MORE ATTRACTIVE TO FAR THAN VANG VIENG, WHICH IS IN A FAN (NEUTRALIST)

AREA. RLGAFF ARTILLERY, ARMORED AND COMBAT TROOPS (OTHER THAN THOSE IN PRESCRIBED SECURITY FORCES) NOW STATIONED IN VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG WILL BE OBLIGED TO LEAVE THE TWO CITIES BUT THIS MOVEMENT OUGHT NOT PRESENT GREAT DIFFICULTIES.

V. SECURITY SITUATION REMAINS STABLE.

MILITARILY, THE CEASEFIRE HAS REMAINED EXCEEDINGLY EFFECTIVE SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE LAO PROTOCOL. WITH ONE EXCEPTION, NOTED BELOW, ALL INDICATORS OF MILITARY ACTIVITY HAVE CONTINUED AT CONSISTENTLY LOW LEVELS. CEASEFIRE INCIDENTS HAVE AVERAGED FEWER THAN 5 PER WEEK, WITH A TOTAL OF ONLY 6 MAJOR AND 50 MINOR INCIDENTS REPORTED SINCE SEPTEMBER 14. CAUSALTIES FOR THE THREE-MONTH PERIOD SHOW 12 FAR KILLED AND 32 WOUNDED; 13 ENEMY KILLED AND 26 WOUNDED. COMBAT AIR SORTIES WERE ALSO MINIMAL, WITH FLAF FLYING ONLY 9 T-28 AND ONE AC-47 STRIKES DURING THE THREE MONTHS. REFLECTING THE EFFECTIVE CEASEFIRE, THE CONFIDENTIAL

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LAO CABINET ENDED THE "STATE OF EMERGENCY" IN LAOS AS OF JANUARY 1, 1974.

THE SINGLE EXCEPTION TO THE FAVORABLE CEASEFIRE INDICES HAS BEEN THE INCREASE IN RECENT WEEKS IN THE NUMBER OF U.S. AIR CONTRACT AND RLG AIRCRAFT WHICH HAVE RECEIVED GROUND FIRE. ALTHOUGH THIS GROUND FIRE INCREASE IS NOWHERE NEAR PRE-FEBRUARY CEASEFIRE LEVELS, IT HAS DEVELOPED DURING A PERIOD OF LESSENING U.S. AND RLG AIR OPERATIONS IN LAOS AND IS MORE OMINOUS FOR THAT REASON. TWENTY AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN FIRED UPON SINCE SEPTEMBER 14, WITH MONTHLY TOTALS OF SUCH INCIDENTS AS FOLLOWS:

JULY 1 OCTOBER - 7

AUGUST 1 NOVEMBER - 7

SEPTEMBER 4 DECEMBER - 3.

ONLY ONE AIRCRAFT HAS ACTUALLY BEEN SHOT DOWN: AN RLAF HELICOPTER IN DECEMBER, WITH A CREWMEMBER AND ONE PASSENGER STILL MISSING. TWELVE OF THE 20 POST-PROTOCOL FIRINGS HAVE OCCURRED IN THE SALA PHOU KHOUN AREA AND SOUTHEAST OF LUANG PRABANG. THESE AREAS ARE IN THE GENERAL FLIGHT PATH FOR RESUPPLY OF BOUAM LONG AND MUONG SOU.

ARTICLE XIII(C) OF THE PROTOCOL PROVIDES FOR AERIAL RESUPPLY OF "ENCLAVES" IN LPF-CONTROLLED TERRITORY; HOWEVER, THE DESIGNATION OF ROUTES IS SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION WITH THE JCCIA. LPF FORCES ARE APPARENTLY UNDER ORDERS TO FIRE ON AIRCRAFT CIRCLING POSITIONS BUT NOT ON STRAIGHT LINE FLIGHTS. THE RESUPPLY OF ISOLATED RLG POSITIONS IS BOUND TO BE A SUBJECT OF CONTENTION ONCE THE JCCIA BEGINS DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE.

THE INCREASE IN THE INCIDENCE OF GROUND FIRE

HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY INTENSIFIED LPF PROPAGANDA CONDEMNATIONS OF USG AND RLG OVERFLIGHTS OF THE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED ZONE. THESE HAVE INCLUDED EXAGGERATED CLAIMS OF THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT DOWNED AND A CRESCENDO OF INVENTIVE INCLUDING SOME BROADCASTS MADE BY THE ONE AMERICAN IN LPF HANDS--EMMET KAY.

VI. CONCLUSION

THE LAO AGREEMENT AND ITS IMPLEMENTING PROTOCOL ARE COMPLICATED AND CUMBERSOME. PERHAPS ANY WHERE ELSE THEY CONFIDENTIAL

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WOULD BE UNWORKABLE, BUT IN LAOS THEY PROVIDED THE FRAME-
WORK FOR ACTIVE AND CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS. DURING THE
PAST THREE MONTHS, THE LAO PARTIES HAVE PROCEEDED
DELIBERATELY, BUT STEADILY, IN LAYING THE GROUNDWORK
FOR IMPLEMENTING THESE AGREEMENTS. INTRODUCTION OF
MORE THAN 2400 LPF PERSONNEL INTO THE TWO CAPITAL CITIES
OF THE RLG ZONE HAS BEEN A MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT AND HAS
WORKED A CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
ENVIRONMENT. MILITARILY THIS LPF PRESENCE NOW CONSTITUTES
A SIGNIFICANT COUNTERVAILING FORCE AGAINST ANY EFFORT BY
RLG MILITARY LEADERS TO REVERSE OR DISRUPT THE IMPLEMENTA-
TION OF THE AGREEMENT. THE LPF FORCES IN THE TWO CITIES,
IN EFFECT, ARE A STRONG AGENT IN BINDING THE RLG SIDE TO
SOUVANNA'S DESIGNS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT.
WITH THE ACTIVATION OF THE JCCIA, THE PARTIES ARE
NOW PROCEEDING TO INSTITUTIONALIZE FURTHER THE IMPLEMENTA-
TION OF THE AGREEMENT. THE JCCIA PROVIDES A FORUM FOR
WORKING OUT THE COUTLESS MUNDANE DETAILS INVOLVED IN
"NEUTRALIZING" THE CITIES AND ALSO PROVIDES A CONTINUING

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 4 VIENTIANE 8529

LEGITIMATE FORUM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN THE PARTIES. (THE CHANNEL BETWEEN SOUVANNA PHOUMA AND SOUPHANOUVONG, OF COURSE, OFFERS AT A DIFFERENT LEVEL ANOTHER HELPFUL POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS LINK.) THE PARTIES HAVE ALSO SECURED INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR EFFORTS: THE PRC AND THE SOVIETS FURNISHED AIR-LIFT FOR THE LPF; THE U.S., JAPAN, FRANCE, AUSTRALIA AND THE SOVIETS HAVE PROVIDED OR OFFERED TO PROVIDE MATERIAL OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE JCCIA; AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF ICC/LAOS IS MEETING REGULARLY WITH JCCIA DELEGATIONS TO ARRANGE FOR THE REACTIVATION OF THE ICC. THIS KIND OF INVOLVEMENT BOTH FACILITATES THE WORK OF THE PARTIES AND SYMBOLIZES AN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAO ACCORDS.

THROUGHOUT THIS ENTIRE PERIOD, THE CEASEFIRE WHICH HAD FIRMLY TAKEN HOLD WITHIN A FEW MONTHS AFTER THE FEBRUARY AGREEMENT, HAS REMAINED REMARKABLY EFFECTIVE.

THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST THREE MONTHS HAVE
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MAINTAINED THE POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE NECESSARY FOR EVENTUAL NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IN LAOS. THE LEISURELY PACE MAY HAVE GIVEN LAO LEADERS ON BOTH SIDES TIME TO ADJUST TO THE NEW POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT. HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER BELIEVES THE TIME HAS COME FOR FURTHER SUBSTANTIVE PROGREESS IF THE MOMENTUM FOR THE LAO SETTLEMENT IS NOT TO BE LOST. HE BELIEVES THAT SAM NEUA IS DISPOSED TO MOVE AHEAD AND LAYS THE BLAME FOR DELAY ON HANOI.
DEAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, MILITARY PERSONNEL, NEUTRALIZATION, BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, MILITARY AIRLIFTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: thigpegh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973VIENTI08529
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731257/abqcelqe.tel
Line Count: 529
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: thigpegh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Nov-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <29-Nov-2001 by thigpegh>
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, LA
To: STATE INFO BANGKOK
PHNOM PENH
SAIGON
CINCPAC
CDR USSAG NKP
Type: TE

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